

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i Addysg a Dysgu Proffesiynol Athrawon | Inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education

TT 06

Ymateb gan : Gwasanaeth Addysg Catholig

Response from : Catholic Education Service

The Catholic Education Service fully supports the aspirations of Welsh Government for educational development and improvement in Wales, recognising that, taken together, the practitioner-led development of the new school curriculum, the developments in initial-teacher training post-Furlong, and the introduction of the Professional Learning Passport for serving teachers, alongside the renewed emphasis on a research-rich, self-improving, workforce, have the potential to be truly transformational in the development of the school workforce.

- Arrangements for continuing professional development for the current workforce.

The development and use of the Professional Learning Passport, as with the development of the new curriculum and its associated professional, self-improving, learning needs, are at an embryonic stage at present. From the perspective of the Catholic Education Service, one key area of concern is the readiness of the school workforce to balance the statutory nature of Religious Education, and in our case, the requirement under Charity Law for Religious Education to fulfil the Trust Deed of the school as a charity, with the subject's integration into a 'Humanities' area of learning. Excellence in Religious Education is a prerequisite to help ensure prejudice and discrimination are not a feature of Welsh society. A CYPE line of enquiry into the nature and future of Religious Education in Wales may be timely.

- The role of Initial Teacher Training.

The CES believes it would be beneficial to have a single body responsible for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education in Wales. The Education Workforce Council is already well-established and has extensive administration experience and credibility in order to carry out this role. A CYPE line of enquiry into how best to structure and provide Initial Teacher Training would be helpful

As one of the three providers of maintained education in Wales, alongside Local Authorities and the Church in Wales, Catholic schools are integral to the maintained system in Wales. On behalf of the sector, the Catholic Education Service expects identified Catholic schools to take a lead in any future partnerships between Higher Education Institutions and Catholic schools in order to secure the sector's

development and role in the provision of Church schools in Wales. An exploration on the place of Church schools in Wales, and on how Initial Teacher Education partnerships might support the sector, would be helpful.

- The sufficiency of the Workforce.

The Catholic Education Service's annual Digest of Census Data for Schools and Colleges in Wales (2016: <http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/ces-census>) provides some indicators on areas of concern. One is on the recruitment of school leaders. For example, in both 2015 and 2016, there were more primary school headteacher vacancies (8% and 6%) than there were primary staff with the NPQH (6% in both years). Whilst the NPQH remains mandatory in Wales, there is pressure on the sector to recruit school leaders. Experienced school leaders in England without the NPQH are currently not able to apply for posts in Wales because of the NPQH requirement. An enquiry into the nature of the NPQH may prove useful in this area. We recognise the importance of partnership working in this area and welcome the Consortia funding for the 2016-2017 Church School Leadership programme, which currently has 47 participants.

Secondly, the CES Digest of school data indicates that in 2016 only 5.6% of primary school teachers were qualified to teach Religious Education. We believe the training of the next generation of Religious Education teachers in Wales should be a priority in Wales and would welcome a line of enquiry in the CYPE on the future recruitment and formation of qualified Religious Education teachers in Wales.

The Catholic Education Service would welcome the opportunity for further discussions with the Children, Young People and Education Committee on the place of the Church school sector in the development of a research-rich, self-improving, workforce in Wales, both to meet the needs of the Church school sector and to support the aspirations of Welsh society and government.

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